

(195⁴⁸) Department.

Ms. SERIES.

G.O. No.

1050 Education

Dated

30-4-48.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Copy of letter No.3163-DVII/46-1, from the Curator, Madras Record Office, Chittoor, addressed to the Secretary to Government, Education and Public Health Department, Madras.

Sir,

Sub:- Post-war reorganization of archives offices in India-
Recommendation of the Indian Historical Records Commission.

Ref:- Government Endorsement No.69926-1-C2-Education, dated
28th November, 1948.

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With their endorsement referred to above the Government have forwarded to me for my remarks a copy of a Pamphlet entitled "Post war Reorganization of Archives offices in India" which has been received by them from the Indian Historical Records Commission. The Government have also invited my attention to G.O.No. 758, Education dated 15th May 1945 in this connection. On perusing the pamphlet I find that it is only a reprint of the pamphlet which was received last year from the Government of India with their letter No.F.92-115-E, dated 5th April 1945. While, however, the Government of India did not call for a report last year the Indian Historical Records Commission has now requested the provincial governments "to intimate in due course any action they may propose to take on it."

2. When this pamphlet was referred to me for my remarks last year I pointed out to the Government how the scheme propounded in it related almost exclusively to the re-organization of the Imperial Record Department and how it had not been suggested that the Provincial governments should follow any of the recommendations contained in it or that they should adapt them to suit their needs. I, however explained in ~~some~~ detail the nature and the scope of the various recommendations that had been made and discussed at some length the necessity for, and the possibility of, adopting them in the Madras Record Office. The Government were thereupon pleased to state that I should submit to them, after the war was over, proposals for effecting improvements in the Madras Record Office on the line indicated by me. As the war has now been over for more than a year I would have already submitted my proposals were it not for the fact that the extraordinary conditions created by the war still exist. Since however, the Government have called my attention to their order I presume that I am now required to submit my proposals and accordingly proceed to do so. Before, however, explaining my proposals I shall first offer my remarks upon the pamphlet of the Indian Historical Records Commission as ordered by the Government. It will be seen from my letter read in G.O.No.758, Education dated 15-5-1945 that I have already offered fairly full remarks upon each of the suggestions contained in the pamphlet. Still, as the Government have again called for my remarks, I deem it necessary to repeat these remarks and to add such fresh remarks as I may have to offer now.

3. The most important recommendation contained in the pamphlet is that microfilm copies of all the records and books relating to Indian History, which are not available in India but which may be available in the archives, libraries and similar institutions in England, France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, United States of America, the Netherlands Indies etc. etc., should be obtained and deposited in the Imperial Record Department. With the object of making such a collection it is proposed that an officer should be deputed to these countries to examine the several collections and to obtain microfilm copies of all the requisite documents and books. It is expected that this officer will require at least 3 years to complete his work and that the expenses of his mission will amount to Rs. 3,00,000 approximately. Of course a number of special projects and special reading rooms will also have to be provided to enable students doing historical research to consult the films. If the recommendation is accepted by the Government of India microfilm copies of all documents relating to India including those relating to Madras will be brought and deposited in the Imperial Record Department. And this will no doubt be useful to students who may find the records available in the Madras Record Office to be incomplete in any particular instance. It is, however doubtful

doubtful whether a scheme of this magnitude can be successfully accomplished within a period of 3 years or at the estimated expenditure of Rs. 3,00,000. It is stated that gaps in the records in the Imperial Record Department are large and that the necessity for filling them up is urgent. So far as the records of the Madras Government are concerned it may be stated that students who have carried on research in the Madras Record Office have not hitherto found any serious gaps. This is because the records of the Madras Government have always been preserved carefully and because no records of historical interest have at any time been permitted to be destroyed. Of course, a few gaps have been met with in the early records in the course of printing and publishing them but such gaps are not many and most of them have already been filled up by obtaining transcripts from the India Office. It will thus be seen that so far as the Madras Record Office is concerned it is unnecessary to obtain any microfilm copies from abroad on the lines suggested in the case of the Imperial Record Department.

4. Along with the acquisition of microfilms from abroad has been made the recommendation that steps should be taken to salvage manuscripts which may be lying undiscovered in the possession of private individuals in India itself. This is not a new recommendation. The Indian Historical Records Commission has during the last 4 years more than once suggested the formation of Regional Survey Committees to unearth the historical documents which may be in private possession. The desirability of forming such a committee can not be questioned, but the Government have, after repeated and careful consideration, come to the conclusion that such a committee cannot be appointed until conditions become a little more normal. I invite the attention of the Government in this connection to their letter to the Government of India No. 1574 Education dated 14th August 1946. In the meantime the Government have agreed to grant the necessary facilities to an un-official Committee which, on the recommendation of the Indian Historical Records Commission, has been constituted by

Dewan Bahadur C.S. Srinivasachari (Please see my letter No. 1122-1 DVII/44-2, dated 6 7th July, 1944 in reply to Government Endorsement No. 35097 C-1 Education dated 4-7-44). It does not therefore appear to be necessary to consider again the question of appointing a fresh committee at present.

5. A suggestion that has been made in connection with the Regional Survey Committees is that the Central and the Provincial Governments should be legally authorised to take charge of such manuscripts as may be unearthed by these committees and that for purchasing, such manuscripts, when required, and for defraying the expenses of the Committee the Central and the Provincial Governments should set apart suitable sums every year. I may point out here that this is the only part of the pamphlet in which a definite suggestion has been made to the Provincial Governments to act upon. It is stated that the Central Government may have to place a sum of Rs. 10,000 every year at the disposal of the Director of Archives. How much of this sum will be spent upon the touring expenses of the members of the Committees and how much upon the purchase of manuscripts has not been indicated. If the Committees are to be really useful they should consist of influential representatives of the various interests in the country besides technical experts like the Government Archivist. The touring expenses of the members of such Committees are likely to be large and may well exceed the value of the manuscripts which might be purchased through their efforts. The question is not, however, one which has to be considered by the Provincial Government now. It will arise only when a regional committee is formed by the Government. When the Government decide to appoint such a committee an estimate of the expenditure that will have to be incurred by them will naturally have to be considered.

6. The remaining parts of the pamphlet deal with the introduction of new methods of archives keeping in the Imperial Record Department. I shall discuss these suggestions one by one and show how far it is necessary to adopt any of them in the Madras Record Office. Firstly it is suggested that the bundles of records should be arranged horizontally on the shelves instead of vertically and that the additional shelf space that might be required for this purpose should be provided for. This is an idea which has been under my consideration for several years, and is one which I would have

already placed before the Government but for the EWar. I have observed that the records are becoming damaged to some extent by tying up the files into bundles between wooden planks and keeping the bundles erect on the shelves. In order to make the bundles stand erect on the shelves it is necessary that they should be tied tightly. The effect of tying the bundles tightly is to deprive the papers of ventilation, a factor which is important for their preservation. Again, however tight a bundle may be tied the files in it show a tendency to slip down gradually and project below the planks. This leads to the bending and fraying of the bottom edges of the files by bringing them into contact with the shelf and by bringing the entire weight and pressure upon the files instead of the planks. On account of this course of time the bottom edges of the files break off from the files when the ~~bund~~ bundles are handled.

7. The ideal arrangement would be to keep the files in their natural position, that is to say, flat, and to see that they are not piled up one over the other to such an extent that some of them are deprived of ventilation. The pamphlet prepared by the Indian Historical Records Commission does not explain whether there will be any practical difficulties in arranging the bundles flat on the shelves and, if so, how they are to be got over. Special boxes or containers of steel or cardboard are known to be used extensively in the National Archives, United States of America, and in some of the archive repositories in Europe. It may therefore be considered whether such boxes can be provided in the Madras Record Office. For one thing, the cost of providing containers of steel or cardboard for all the tens of thousands of files in the Madras Record Office will be prohibitive. For another, the containers will require a great deal of additional shelf space and this will ~~mean~~ mean the construction of additional ~~b~~ buildings. ~~xxxxx xxxxxxxx~~ For a third, however suitable closed containers might have proved in cold countries like Europe and America, it doubtful whether in a hot country like India they might not become the breeding places of silver fish, borers and similar records pests. My own experience makes me more and more to distrust containers and to prefer those arrangements alone under which the records are kept more or less open.

8. I ~~has~~ have therefore had under my consideration several plans by which the records can be kept flat on the shelves without using containers and without going in for additional shelf space. I have made experiments in arranging the bundles flat lengthwise as well as breadthwise. My chief difficulty lay in devising a method by which the bundles could be fitted up with prominent labels to indicate the contents in such a manner that the labels would not get out of place when the bundles are opened and tied, as they have to be, in the course of collecting and restoring papers. Under the existing arrangement of keeping the bundles vertical the record rooms present a neat appearance and I was anxious to preserve this effect of neatness as far as possible. I am glad to state that I have finally got over the difficulty of fixing the label in a very satisfactory manner and I am therefore now in a position to place definite proposals before the Government for altering the existing arrangement of keeping the bundles vertically and for keeping them flat on the shelves.

9. According to the arrangement which I have devised the files are tied up into bundles between two wooden planks as at present. The bundles are then placed flat on the shelves side by side in such a way that the bottom edges of the bundles are parallel to the edges of the shelves. To indicate the contents of each bundle, a hinged cardboard is inserted under the top plank in such a manner that a part of the cardboard hangs down and covers the bottom edge of the bundle which will otherwise be exposed to the view. Over this part of the cardboard is pasted a printed label indicating in bold types the contents of the bundle. With a border of green canvas or calico the boards will hang stiffly and present an appearance of a row of cardboard boxes arranged neatly on the shelves. An advantage of this method is that it will be possible to keep one bundle over the other without spoiling the general effect if, in the interests of economy of shelf space, it becomes necessary to do so. In the Madras Record Office, for instance, each shelf is nearly 16 inches high and it will therefore lead to a waste of space if only one bundle is kept on it. Of course it will be advantageous to reduce the height of the shelves to that which is required to take in an average bundle of a thickness of about 8 inches, but this will mean the provision

of numerous additional shelves at considerable cost. I therefore propose to keep on our shelves two rows of bundles, one over the other. Again the racks in the Madras Record Office are so broad that it will be a waste of space to keep the bundles only on the one side of a shelf. I therefore propose to arrange the bundles on either side of each shelf. The shelves are just broad enough to take in two bundles arranged end to end in this way. This arrangement will have a decided advantage over the existing arrangement under which generally four and some some times more bundles are kept vertically back to back on each shelf with the result that it is not possible to lay one's hand readily on the exact bundle required. Hereafter it will be possible to see at a glance the labels of all the bundles and to take readily the exact bundle that may be required.

10. And this new arrangement costs almost next to nothing. All that is required is a piece of cardboard measuring about 10 inches by 9 inches and divided into two parts and connected to each other by means of a hinge of canvas or calico. These boards can be made easily. If the work of making them is entrusted to the Government Press the cost is likely to be very low. On the whole about 50,000 boards may be required but it may not be necessary to supply all these boards at once. They can be supplied at the rate of 10,000 a year. While the change is being effected it may also be advisable to make all the bundles of a uniform thickness. At present their thickness varies from 3 or 4 inches to 15 or 16 inches. The bundles which are too thick are heavy and cannot be handled conveniently while those which are too thin lead to a waste of planks, tapes etc. A thickness of 8 inches will be a convenient size. For making the bundles uniformly of this thickness it may be necessary to obtain some fresh planks, labels and tapes. It will also be necessary to set apart some attenders exclusively for this purpose. This is, however, not difficult. There are now 24 attenders in the Mending Section of the office some or all these can be usefully diverted temporarily for attending to this useful work. In fact by this diversion they will be assisting in the preservation of the records which are now slowly but steadily becoming damaged under the existing vertical arrangement system. If the Government approve these proposals I shall ascertain from the Superintendent, Government Press, the cost of making the boards and shall submit to the Government an estimate of the system. As this is a most beneficial and at the same time a very practicable measure I beg earnestly to recommend that the Government may be pleased to approve it at an early date.

11. Turning now to the remaining recommendations contained in the pamphlet, it is suggested that, in view of the variations of temperature prevailing at Delhi, the record rooms of the Imperial Record Department should be air-conditioned. Air-conditioning has at present been introduced, so far as I know, only in the National Archives of the United States of America. The pamphlet does not indicate the cost of air-conditioning the record rooms of the Imperial Record Department. There is, however, no doubt that it is bound to be an expensive improvement. Considering that the bulk of the records in the Madras Record Office is much larger than the bulk of the records in the Imperial Record Department the cost of air-conditioning our record blocks is bound to be much more expensive. It may perhaps run to several lakhs of rupees for installation and a large sum for running expenses. It must at the same time be stated that air-conditioning will not doubt be attended by very beneficial results so far as the preservation of archives is concerned. The only disadvantage is that it is too expensive and too impracticable an improvement to be thought of especially in the conditions prevailing at present. Seeing that, air-conditioning has not been introduced even in record offices like the public Record Office, London, it is doubtful whether it is really necessary to air-condition the record rooms of the Madras Record Office at present.

12. One of the advantages of air-conditioning is that it provides for the filtration of the air coming into the record rooms and thus eliminates the problem of dust, a problem which is very serious especially in record offices which are situated in large cities. Experience in the Madras Record Office, I am sure, has shown that the accumulation of dust is so rapid that it is well-nigh impossible to keep the records at any time completely free from it. While the records

at one end of a block are being dusted the records at the other end are covered with a thick layer of dust and by the time one comes to the other end the records at the first end are again covered with dust. This interminable fight with dust goes on throughout the year and leads to a considerable waste of time and labour. With the object of rendering the work of dusting the records quicker and easier a vacuum cleaner was purchased some years ago and instructions were issued to the effect that it should be used for dusting some of the records of every block every day. In actual practice, however, it has been found to be difficult to follow these instructions. When the attenders of a block are in a position to attend to dusting they very often find that the vacuum cleaner is not available, being in use in another block. And by the time it is available the attenders are unable to use it being busy picking up papers, restoring papers and so on. There is no doubt that one vacuum cleaner is quite insufficient to meet the needs of 9 large record blocks. I would therefore recommend that 6 more vacuum cleaners be purchased. They will be required not now but only after the records are transferred back to Madras. If the Government approve this suggestion I shall ascertain the cost of purchasing the vacuum cleaners and submit definite proposals. The provision of additional vacuum cleaner will go a long way towards the elimination of dust, though not to the same extent as air-conditioning.

13. The next recommendation that has been made in the pamphlet is the introduction of the method of vacuum fumigation for the destruction of record pests which may be found among the records. This is also a method which, so far as I know, has been adopted only in America. This requires a special and somewhat costly vacuum chamber worked by electricity. The necessity for fumigating records in such a chamber will arise only when the bulk of the infected records is large. There is a simple and inexpensive way of fumigating records of small bulk. All that is required is an ordinary chest or box provided with the wooden grating inside. The records to be fumigated are placed on the grating and the fumigant, usually para-dichlorobenzene crystals, is kept in a dish below the grating. The box is then closed and the crevices are sealed with vaseline to make it air-tight. After some days the box is opened, care being taken to see that no flame is brought near, and the records are removed. This method has been advocated by British Archivists. So far as the Madras Record Office is concerned it may be stated that the records are generally free from insects and that therefore there is no necessity to obtain a special vacuum chamber for fumigating the records. Modern records which are transferred every year to the Madras Record Office do not require any fumigation whatever, being quite free from insects. Some of the old district records alone showed signs of having been attacked by borers before they were transferred to this office. The leather bindings of these records which have become very old and which attract the insects have been removed as a measure of precaution and they are now as free from insects as the other collections. The records in record rooms in the district are however likely to contain insect pests. But even for fumigating these records a vacuum chamber is perhaps unnecessary. The simple method which I have explained above may answer the purpose. I propose to provide one or two of the chests available in the Madras Record Office with wooden gratings and thus convert them into fumigation chambers, after the records are transferred back to Madras. I shall then find out whether any of the district records require fumigation and, if so, arrange for such fumigation either in the Madras Record Office or in the offices concerned.

14. The next suggestion contained in the pamphlet is that 'laminating' machinery should be introduced in the Imperial Record Department. Lamination is a technical process which is now being followed by the National Archives, United States of America. Briefly, this process consists in placing the sheet of paper to be repaired between two thin transparent foils of cellulose acetate and compressing the whole by machinery under heat and great pressure in a special press until the foils adhere firmly to the sheet. The foils, in fact, not only adhere to the paper but are stated to become part and parcel of the original sheet. This process of reinforcing old and brittle documents has been evolved recently as a result of experiments made in America and its use is at present limited to the National Archives, United States of America. Its effects in the long run cannot be safely predicted at present. It has been condemned in no uncertain terms by some of the greatest English archivists. So recently as October 1945 the Technical Section of the British Records Association, a body which is composed of some of the greatest

authorities on archive matters, has deprecated the process of lamination. Contrasting chiffoining, a method which is followed in the Madras Record Office and which will be described below, with lamination, Mr. Evans of the Public Record Office, London, explains that while in the method of chiffoining nothing is done that cannot be undone and the document does not suffer any damage, in the method of lamination the document cannot be retrieved if it should hereafter be found that the process is harmful to the documents. He says: "If the silk or the paper or paste or the repairing work is unsatisfactory the work can be done again: immediately or in future the document does not suffer. On the other hand the process of grouting the cellulose acetate sheeting into the decayed paper is a drastic operation. To what extent can it be undone? It would be possible presumably to remove the cellulose acetate by means of a solvent such as acetone; but would the document, fragile before the melting foil was forced into its fibres and then dissolved out, would the document be in a state to bear witness to anything but its rigorous treatment?" Again he asks, "What guarantee is there of the permanence of the qualities of the new material, that, with the passage of time, its transparency will not be marred by discoloration and its flexibility give way to brittleness?" Seeing that the method of lamination has been based entirely on certain laboratory tests carried out in America, Mr. Evans doubts very much whether it can safely be predicted whether the documents treated under the process of lamination will last as long those which have been treated under the methods which have stood the test of time. Finally he pronounces his definite opinion against lamination in the these words: "In the treatment of frail and damaged paper documents which it is our business to preserve, we have drawn attention to what we hold to be the fundamental error of employing a new treatment of improved stability in a process of repair that is practically irreversible and irrevocable; albeit a process that can deal with a large number of documents rapidly and with a minimum of skilled staff; and one which, while the converging medium remains unaffected, protects the documents from excessive humidity or dryness and from attack by insects."

15. In view of the decided opinion expressed by the English Archivists it is not advisable to abandon the method of mending records which have stood the test of time and to go in for a method like lamination which stands on laboratory tests alone. The method which is advocated by the English archivists and which has been followed in the Madras Record Office during the last 25 years is the method known as 'Chiffoining'. Under this method the damaged sheet of paper is pasted over with chiffon, a thin kind of silk, and held together at the edges with guards of durable hand made paper. The sheets are then made up into files or bound into handsome volumes with green art canvas. More than 3,000 volumes comprising all the volumes before 1800 have thus been mended and bound. Thousands of files have also been repaired. One of the advantages claimed for lamination is that it is a much quicker process than chiffoining. It must however, be mentioned that lamination requires special and expensive machinery and specially trained technicians to work it properly. The working expenses are also likely to be large. Chiffoining, on the other hand, cannot be said to be such a slow process especially if a sufficient number of menders are employed. To judge by the experience gained in the Madras Record Office, where a staff of 24 trained menders are employed, the rate of progress is by no means small. If the number of menders is increased it will be possible to increase the progress and to complete in a few years the work of mending all the records which require repairs. And if all the records are repaired in this manner with chiffon their safety will be assured whereas if they were to be laminated it will be difficult to predict their fate after the lapse of 50 or 60 years.

16. Chiffon is an article which is now scarce and dear owing to the war, but a sufficient stock of it was laid in for the use of the Madras Record Office before Japan declared war and the mending programme of the office has therefore not been interrupted till now, although strict economy in the use of the article was practised as ordered by the Government. It was expected that when the war ended chiffon would become available in sufficient quantities, but, as a matter of fact, it is not yet available in the market. Several attempts have been made to obtain a supply, but without result. With the object, therefore, of conserving the stock and making it last as long as possible the menders have latterly been diverted to some

to some extent to the repair of records which can be mended without much chiffon. Among the modern records (I mean records of about 1900 and onwards) there are many files which are in a bad condition. These files contain manifolded and other flimsy varieties of paper which cannot stand much handling and therefore become damaged easily. But as they are frequently required for reference they will be damaged easily. But as they are frequently required for reference they ~~are~~ will be damaged irreparably if they are not mended as soon as the defects are noticed. The mending of these modern files will not require any large quantity of chiffon. I have therefore ordered the ~~m~~ menders to take up these files instead of the old records which require a great deal of chiffon. The bundles of modern records are examined systematically and all the files which require repairs are selected and sent to the mending section. Here the menders attend to them properly reinforce the sheets which are weak, flatten those which are folded and, in short, make them quite fit for handling. This work is as urgent and useful, if not more, than the work of repairing the old records. Of course the old records will not be lost sight of. They will all be mended as soon as the chiffon position improves.

17. When chiffon becomes readily available this office can also usefully take up the repair of the damaged records belonging to other Government offices. This office has always been attending to such repairs, especially when they required repairs by expert menders, but latterly it has been compelled to refuse several requests for assistance in this direction, chiefly on account of the scarcity of child chiffon and hand made mending paper. When this scarcity disappears the repairs of these will be taken up on a systematic programme.

18. Another improvement which it is very desirable to introduce is the substitution of manilla dockets for files in the place of the present brown paper dockets and the use of good durable paper for all records of permanent value. The brown paper dockets damage the files in course of time. I have already pointed this out to the Government and they have agreed that the dockets should be made of manilla paper of different colours for different departments. That records intended for permanent retention should be made on durable paper needs no argument. But the outbreak of the war and the consequent scarcity of paper have made it ~~pos~~ impossible either to introduce manilla docket or to insist upon the use of durable paper for records of permanent value when paper becomes freely available again these two proposals will be considered again.

19. Turning to the next recommendation contained in the pamphlet, it has been proposed that the imparting of training in archive-keeping should ~~be~~ form part of the duties of the Imperial Record Department. It is stated that a number of record Offices will soon be opened in the several provinces and Indian States and that it is necessary ~~that~~ that the persons in charge of these offices should be trained in archive-keeping in the Imperial Record Department. So far as the Madras Record Office is concerned it was organized more than 35 years ago and it has always been administered on up-to-date scientific lines. It is a member of the British Record Association and is in close touch with the latest developments in archival science both in Great Britain and America. In fact it has generally been admitted to be the largest as well as the most progressive and well-organized Record Office in India. That this is no exaggeration the Government can see from the observations made about this office in a publication called "Historical Records of the Surveyor of India Eighteenth Century" issued last year by the Surveyor General of India. In his preface to this publication Col. R.H. Phillimore, C.I.E., D.S.O., the editor of the book, describes his visits to the various Record Offices in India and in regard to the Madras Record Office states as follows: "From Bombay I went to Madras where I found a mass of information in the wonderful Record Office ~~states as follows:~~ at Egmore, where the records are in excellent preservation and readily accessible and the collection of valuable old maps most beautifully kept. I have specially to thank Dr. Baliga and his staff for their very courteous and valuable assistance."

20. The Madras Record Office possesses ample facilities for training those who might desire to be trained in archive keeping.

The Government have laid down as long ago as 1934 that the Curator of the office should, on his appointment, undergo a course of training in archives keeping in England. I have undergone this training in the famous Record Offices in England like the Public Record Office, the India Office, the Canterbury Repository, the Foreign Office, the British Museum, the Bedford Country Muniments and the Birmingham Reference Library and I am therefore in a position to train persons in the theory as well as the practice of archive administration. Again the Madras Record Office possesses immense collections of records of all kinds from the earliest times down to the present, belonging to the Government, the Board of Revenue, the Collectors etc. etc., and these have been arranged in a series of large record blocks specially designed for housing and re-condition old, a damaged and brittle documents on up-to-date scientific lines. It has developed to a high degree the technique of 'servicing' that is, making available to the Department of the Government, the Board of Revenue etc., all the information upon any given subject in a convenient form and thereby promoting efficient administration. It has from the beginning been engaged upon various schemes of publication like printing in extenso calendaring, indexing and publishing selections; It has already issued more than 400 publications. Indeed there is hardly any aspect of archive administration which has not been properly studied and developed in the Madras Record Office.

21. Nor is this all. The Madras Record Office has actually trained a number of persons in archive preservation. In 1941, at the request of the Government of Bombay, the Keeper of Records of that Government and their Historical Archivist were trained in this office in the theory as well as the practice of archive administration. A clerk and two attenders of the Madras High Court were also trained in the mending and preservation of records. Training in mending has likewise been given by this office to an attender from each of the offices of the Collectors and District Judges in the Province. In addition to such practical training the office has also been frequently giving advice on archival matters to a number of institutions belonging not only to this Province but also to other provinces and states.

22. It will, perhaps, be desirable to give training in both the theory and the practice of archive administration to the Record Keepers of all the record rooms in the districts and in the offices of the Heads of Departments in the City. Arrangements for such a training can easily be made in the Madras Record Office, but this is a matter which cannot be taken up until the records are shifted back to Madras. After the records are transferred I shall submit suitable proposals to the Government.

23. It will be seen from all that I have stated above that the pamphlet received from the Indian Historical Records Commission contains very few suggestions which are practicable at present or which can safely be adopted so far as the Madras Record Office is concerned. I have, however, indicated which of these suggestions can, with suitable modifications, be adopted under the conditions now existing. In making these suggestions I have been guided not only by the experience gained by me in the archive repositories in England but also by the experience gained by me in the Madras Record Office during the last 12 years. I have carefully considered the feasibility of every proposal before placing it before the Government. I have also considered the great need for economy at present and have suggested only such of the schemes as are not costly.

24. I shall now recapitulate briefly the various proposals contained in the pamphlet and indicate against each how far it is necessary to adopt it in the Madras Record Office.

1. Proposal to depute an officer to foreign countries to take microfilm copies of records which are missing in the Imperial Record Department--This proposal concerns only the Imperial Record Department. It is unnecessary to send an officer to foreign countries to obtain microfilm copies of any records for the Madras Record Office since the gaps in the Madras Records are extremely few. (Please see para 3).

2. Proposals to take steps to salvage manuscripts of historical

interest lying in private custody--The Government have already stated that a regional Survey Committee will be constituted when conditions become normal. In the meantime they have agreed to afford all reasonable facilities to an ad hoc regional survey committee formed by Diwan Bahadur C.S. Srinivasachari (please see paragraph 4.)

3. Proposal to authorise the Central and the Provincial Governments to take charge of manuscripts salvaged from private custody and to set apart funds for the travelling expenses of the members of the Regional Survey Committees and for purchasing manuscripts -- This is the only proposal which contains a definite suggestion to the Provincial Government to act upon. This can, however, be considered only when the Government set up a proper regional survey committee. (Please see paragraph 5.)

4. Proposal to keep bundles containing records flat upon the shelves instead of vertically - I have shown how this can be carried out without incurring any large expenditure I request the orders of the Government upon my proposal. (Please see para 6 to 10)

5. Proposal to introduce vacuum fumigation in the Imperial Record Department--This is not really necessary for the Madras Record Office where the records are generally free from insects. A simple method of fumigation can be adopted when fumigation is found to be necessary (Please see paragraph 12).

6. Proposal to air-condition the record rooms of the Imperial Record Department - This is too costly an improvement to be considered for the Madras Record Office at present. The provision of additional vacuum cleaners for sustaining the records is the only measure that is now practicable. (Please see paragraphs 11 to 12)

7. Proposal to repair old records according to the method of lamination--This method requires special and costly machinery and skilled technicians to work it. Moreover it has been severely condemned by eminent archivists as being a dangerous innovation. The Madras Record Office may therefore continue to follow the method of repairing records with chiffo, a method which has stood the test of time. The scarcity of chiffo caused by the War has made it necessary, to use this article sparingly. Attention is therefore now directed to the mending of some of the modern records which require little or no chiffo. When chiffo becomes freely available the mending of the old records will be resumed and completed. The mending of the damaged records of other Government offices which has now been interrupted will also be resumed. A proposal to introduce manilla docketts in the place of brown paper docketts has already been approved by the Government. When the paper scarcity disappears the proposal will be carried into effect. (Please see paragraphs 14 to 18).

8. Proposal to train archivists in the Imperial Record Department - This training is intended for the keepers or Curators of the Record Offices which may be organized hereafter. The Madras Record Office was organized more than 35 years ago and is run on up-to-date scientific lines. The Curator of the office has been trained in the archive repositories of England and is in touch with the latest developments in archival science carried on in England and America. Any training that may be required for record keepers in this province can easily be given by him in the Madras Record Office where ample facilities for such training are available. The Madras Record Office has, in fact, already trained a large number of persons. A scheme of training the Record Keepers of the offices in the province will be taken up after the records are transferred back to Madras (Please see paragraph 19 to 22).

Sd/ B.S. Balaga
Curator
17-1-1947.

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education & Public Health Department
(Education)

M. J.

Dated the ~~30th~~ January 1948
READ the following:-

S. J. J. Carls
Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

11/6/72